

On the card

Khidr



From

The Book
of the Tree of Hermes

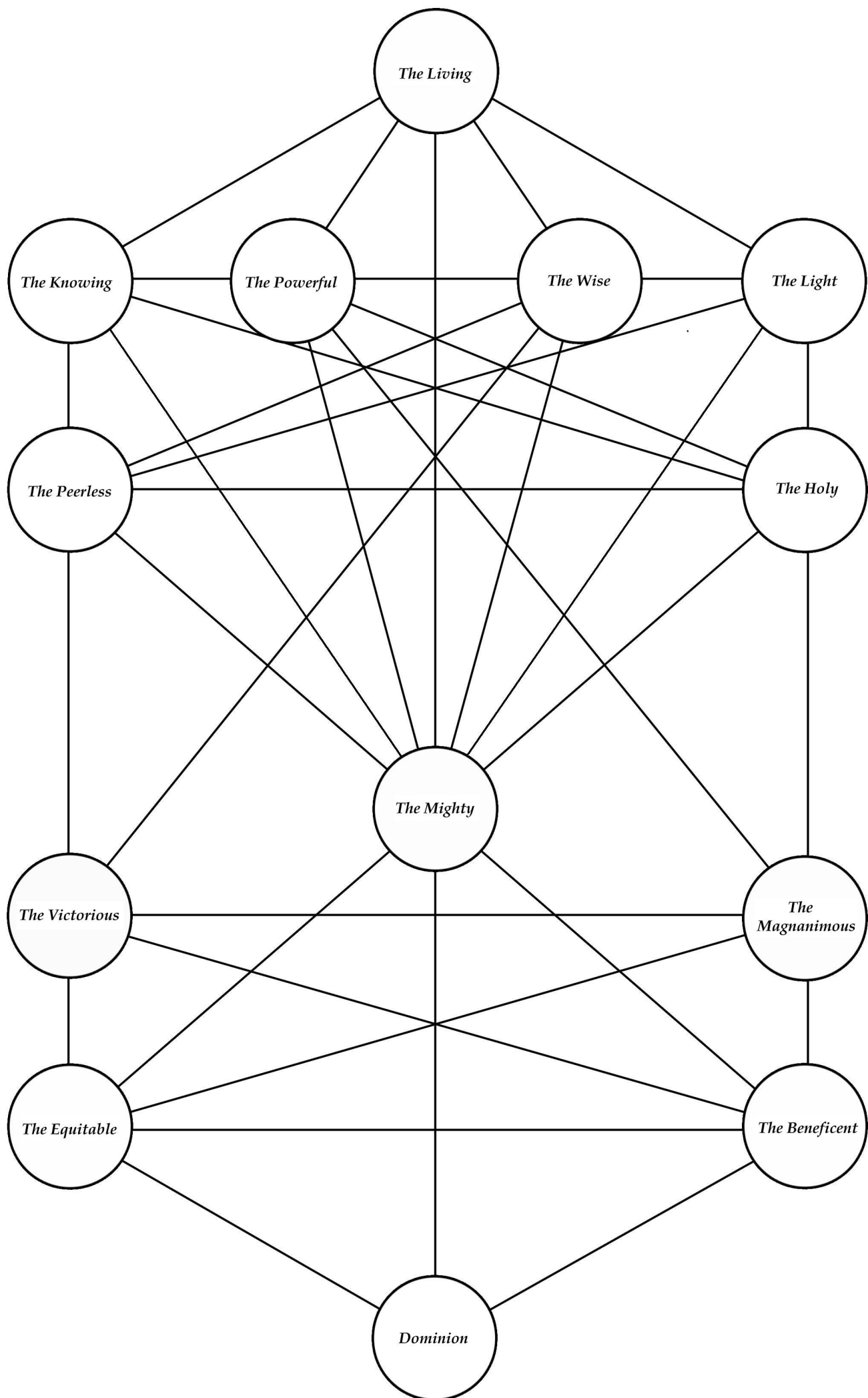
Wahid Azal

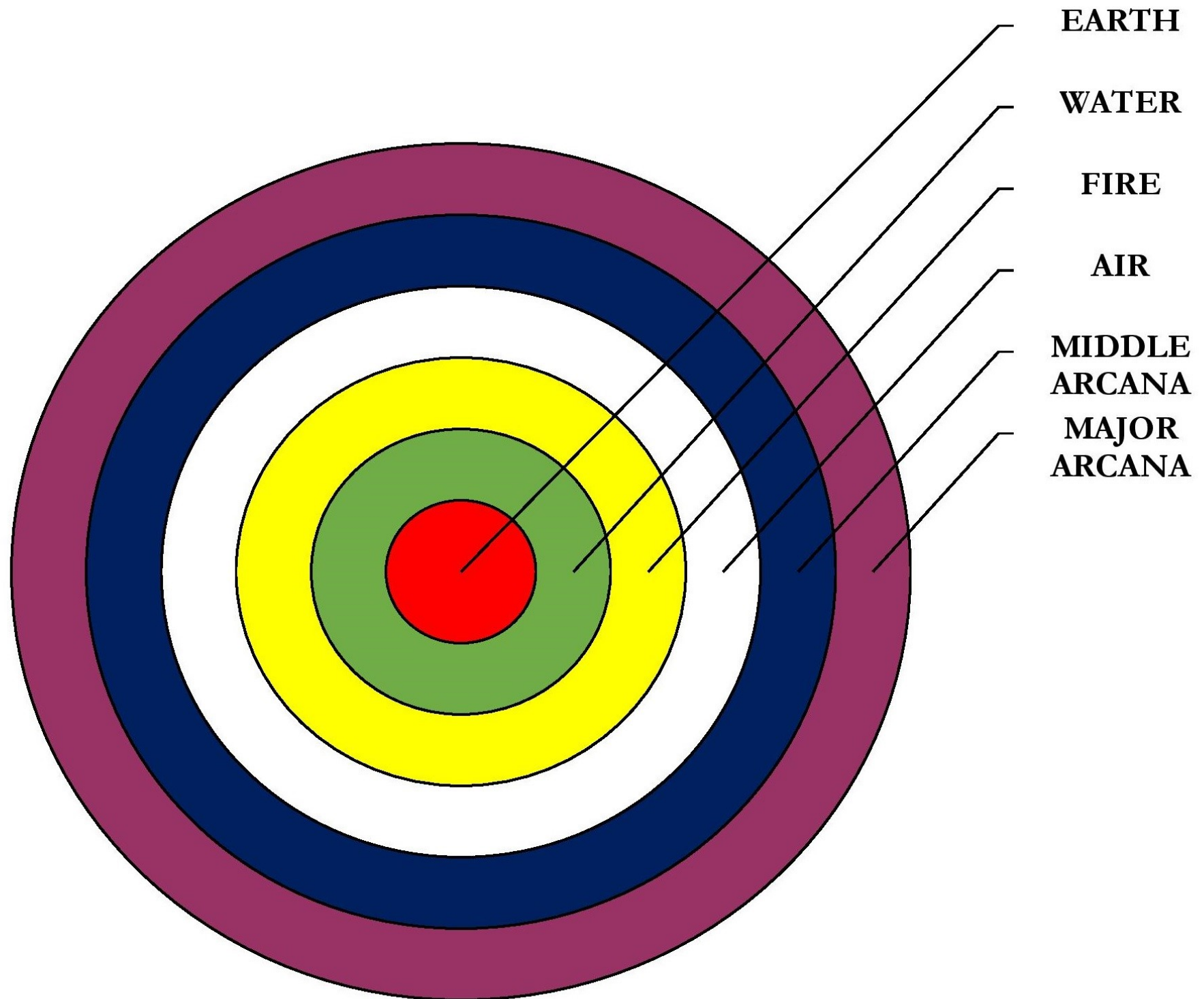




(*jāmāl*)







1

Khidr

*Listen to Khidr, the Lover, who relates
Of the journey to the Sīmorgh, the Beloved, he narrates --
Saying, ever since I was veiled from the Beloved of my Being
From my yearning the magi have become ecstatic by me!
A heart I want to tell of which in my journey is universe envisioning
From the Self-Disclosure of my Adoredly Beloved it is resplendent appearing!
Whosoever was near to their Source
Has understood the secret of wayfaring to their Union!*

Khidr, ‘the Verdant One’, who is the enigmatic figure of **Qur’ān 18:65-82** and is closely connected in Shi‘ite eschatology and gnosis with the figure of the Hidden Imām - not to mention being the patron saint to the *vertical* initiatic mantle of the school of Ibn ‘Arabī (*khirqā akbarīya*) - represents the first **Major Arcana** card of the **NUR Tarot**, replacing ‘The Fool’ in the conventional system of Tarot divination.¹

The contemporary scholarly consensus around **Khidr** holds his prototype to be in the figure of **Utnapishtim** who appears in the Sumerian *Epic of Gilgamesh*.² “...Gilgamesh

¹ For a comprehensive and definitive monograph on **Khidr**, see Patrick Franke *Begegnung mit Khidr: Quellenstudien zum Imaginären im traditionellen islam* (Franz Steiner Verlag: Stuttgart and Wiesbaden, 2000).

² **Eir** (Encyclopedia Iranica): **Khezr**.

The BOOK of the TREE of HERMES

travels to the ‘mouth of a river’ where...mankind’s ancestor Utnapishtim lives, in order to learn the secret of immortality from him...”³ Due to the conflation of the enigmatic *Dhū’l-Qarnayn* (the One of Two Horns) with the historical **Alexander the Great** - and the fact that this specific character appears immediately following the story of Moses and **Khidr** in **Qur’ān 18:83** - the later Islamic tradition also often conflated Alexander with **Khidr**; or, alternatively, made him to be his teacher, counselor and even vizier, somewhat reminiscent of the relationship between the historical Aristotle and the Macedonian conqueror. But he has also been associated with the Old Testament prophets **Elijah** (*Ilyās*) and **Elisha** as well, not to mention St. George (i.e. the historical George of Lydda). In the *Islamaic* legends, **Khidr** discovers the spring of the **Water of Life**, drinks from it and so becomes immortal. Interestingly enough for our purposes, in the Iranian world **Khidr** has sometimes been connected to **Dūraosha**, the *yazata* (spirit-deity) of the sacred **Haoma**, and even to the archangel **Sraosha** who stands as the angelophany of **Vohuman** (Good Mind),⁴ the Zoroastrian name for the Universal Intellect (*‘aql kullī*, the *nous*) who in Illuminationist (*ishrāqī*) diction constitutes the ‘Lord of the species’ (*rabb-i-naw’*) to cattle. He has likewise been associated with the goddess-angel **Anāhīta** (about whom we shall have much more to say below): **Anāhīta** who is considered in some Zoroastrian traditions as the prophet Zarathushtra’s initiator and what archangel Gabriel is to Muḥammad in Islam. Without providing a source, Steingass quotes the following proverb regarding **Khidr** as being the basis for his name:

خضر بهار در قدم دارد

khezr bahār dar qadam dārad

³ Ibid., citing A. J. Wensinck and J. H. Kramers, *Handwörterbuch des Islam* (E.J Brill: Leiden, 1941): 286-91; see also, A. J. Wensinck, “*al-Khaḍir*,” in **EP² IV** (The Encyclopedia of Islam), pp. 902-5.

⁴ **Elr**, *ibid.*; also see, Dersim Gürdal Aksoy *Alevilik, Ermenilik, Kürtlük* (Dipnot yayınevi: Ankara, 2012): 65-80.

The BOOK of the TREE of HERMES

Khiḍr has the Spring in his step!⁵

Said because the ground upon which **Khiḍr** walks immediately becomes ‘green’ and ‘verdant’,⁶ thus making him the chief patron of ecology and the natural environment.

In the 11th gate of the Twelfth Unity of the Completion of the Bayān,⁷ **Khiḍr** represents the perfect archetype and exemplar which all spiritual aspirants should seek to emulate such that one of the aims of this dispensation (*dawr*) of Light (*nūr*) is to actualize the **Age of Khiḍr** (*‘aṣr-i-khiḍr*). This is because as the supreme itinerant who is simultaneously immortal, **Khiḍr** is the perfect (left-hand path) Qalandar wherein orthodoxy and heterodoxy are one with him - faith (*īmān*) and infidelity (*kufr*) being the same - as he has completely shed such arbitrary dualisms with their often conflicting and confining limitations. As such **Khiḍr** is precisely the kind of gnostic Henry Corbin alludes to in his **Avicenna and the Visionary Recital**:⁸ the gnostic with the ability to inhabit any spiritual universe; and note especially how **Khiḍr**’s penetrating vision and wisdom outshines, bests and thoroughly upstages even the Prophet Moses - the elect of his age and divine emissary of a Tradition⁹ - in their encounter per the Quranic narrative. As such **Khiḍr**

⁵ A *Comprehensive Persian-English Dictionary*, Fifth Impression (Routledge & Kegan Paul: London, 1963): 465.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Wahid Azal *The Completion of the Arabic Bayān and the Eight Paths* (Library of the Greatest Name: Eastern Coast Australia, 2022): 19 (English); ۱۸ (Arabic).

⁸ Trans. Willard R. Trask, Bollingen Series LXVI (Princeton University Press: Princeton, 1969).

⁹ We disagree with those who hold Moses as being **Khiḍr**’s initiate into the higher Mysteries since, per the Quranic narrative of their encounter, Moses (as the consummate prophet of the law) failed on all three of the Verdant One’s trials put to him while exhibiting an acute myopia in the process. As a symbolic allegory, on this specific occasion, at least, we believe that with this tale the **Qur’ān** itself is intending to assert the superiority of esotericism over exotericism, indicating thereby the ultimate blindness to the depths of things by nomocentrism alone in the face of the manifestation of Spirit here symbolized by God’s ‘servant’ (*‘abd*), **Khiḍr**, who is taught the divine knowledge (*‘ilm*) directly by the Divine Itself. It should be noted that among the first stages incumbent upon a novice entering the Sufi Path amongst the more *qalandarī* Iranian *ṭarīqas* is to have him or her stripped of their ‘religion’. We believe this to be a symbolic mimicry and reenactment in the Sufi *ṭarīqa* context of the encounter between Moses and **Khiḍr**; and by ‘stripping’ here is meant the

The BOOK of the TREE of HERMES

is the prototype of the perfect spiritual guide (*murshid*) *qua* the Perfect Human Being (*insān al-kāmil*) where the exoteric and the esoteric are harmoniously balanced – as well as transcended – because it is not to a doctrine, an orthodoxy, even an *orthopraxy*, or merely ideas around Tradition that **Khiḍr** is aligned to, but rather to the Living Divinity Itself. Indeed his station (*maqām*) is so highly elevated that even those legislating messenger-prophets endowed with constancy (*ulū al-‘azm*) such as Moses are incapable of abiding his company for too long or fathoming the depths of his wisdom and penetrating insight into the nature of things, with only a handful of holy figures – such as the Imāms of Shi‘ism or a spiritual genius of the caliber of Ibn ‘Arabī (d. 1240) – ever capable of being in his presence. For **Khiḍr**, there are no veils between him and the Divine because he epitomizes the realization of the famous prophetic prayer, “O God, show us the realities of things as they truly are!”¹⁰ If the contemporary Western Hermetic occulture attributes all of these things to the symbolic figure of Baphomet, in the *Islamaic* esoteric tradition(s) all of these – and much more – are embodied in **Khiḍr**, the Verdant One, who oftentimes has even been characterized by Shi‘ite gnostics as being in a sort of *isomorphic* relationship with the Hidden Imām himself because in this larger tradition **Khiḍr** is the Master of the Initiation *par excellence* and is what Thoth and Hermes Trismegistus are held to be in the Ancient Egyptian and Hermeto-Neoplatonic traditions of antiquity. As such this book could just as well have been called the **Book of Khiḍr**. But given that we are navigating across the sacred symbolism of several sacred civilizations and traditions simultaneously in an alchemical fashion, it was only fitting that it be named the **Book of the Tree of Hermes** where here

confining shells of exotericism and the anti-esoteric manifestations of the ‘religion of the law’: the counter-spiritual ‘religion of the law’ whose chief notaries gnostics everywhere have always condemned as tyrants, hypocrites and charlatans. Note also Henry Corbin’s famous statement that “the Church is Ahriman”.

¹⁰ *Allāhumma arnā haqā’iq al-ashyā’ kamā hīya* (اللهم أرنا حقائق الأشياء كما هي). In itself, this prayer may be used before each process of divination with these cards.

Khidr and Hermes Trismegistus stand for the same larger archetype – or, as it were, immutable-archetypal entity (*‘ayn al-thābita*).

Here now we also draw attention to four exceptionally erudite articles penned by Jereer El-Moor (Gerald Elmore) during the opening years of the 21st century CE that quite suggestively situates the very genesis of the Tarot itself – and especially the card of the Fool – not only in the Islamicate lands of the *maghrib*, but within the larger constellation of figures, forces, tendencies and influences that have been rubricized by contemporary academic scholarship as constituting the school of Ibn ‘Arabī.¹¹

The Fāṭimīya addition to the narrative of Khidr

With that, here in the **NUR Tarot** we also find a facet of **Khidr** heretofore not revealed or discussed elsewhere, which from this point forward also constitutes a point of Fāṭimīya doctrine;¹² and that is, **Khidr** as the ‘perfect lover’ (*‘āshiq al-kāmil*) of the Divine;¹³ a facet of the Verdant One being among those spiritual disclosures (*kashf*) made to the author of this book during the course of his own mystical wayfaring (*sulūk*) when invested with the mantle of **Khidr** (*khirqā khidrīya*) from the locus of the Imaginal World (*‘ālam al-mithāl*) of the Dreaming in a nocturnal vision.¹⁴ As such just as in the **Major Arcana** of the conventional

¹¹ See “*The Occult Tradition of the Tarot in Tangency with the Life of Ibn ‘Arabī*” (**Part 1**), *JMIAS* (Journal of the Muhyiddin Ibn Arabi Society), Volume XXXI, Spring 2002: 1-24; (**Part 2**) *JMIAS*, Volume XXXII, Autumn 2002: 1-25; “*The Fool for Love (Foll Per Amor) as Follower of Universal Religion*” (**Part 1**) *JMIAS*, Volume XXXV, Spring, 2004: 47-74; (**Part 2**) *JMIAS*, Volume XXXVI, Autumn 2004: 85-125.

¹² Indeed we are introducing an additional archetypal narrative to the already existing lore about him.

¹³ Since as a comment once made to this author by an Iranian Sufi master has it, “one can truly ever know what one truly loves because ‘true love’ (*‘ishq-i-ḥaqīqī*) is the Way (*ṣirāt*) to the knowledge (*‘ilm*) of the knower (*‘ālim*) and the thing known (*ma‘lūm*).”

¹⁴ This dream occurred in early 2006 just before the commencement of the first **NUR** year and just after the publication of the first edition of **Liber Dectriarchia Mystica**. In the dream, we were at the **Valley of NUR** at

The BOOK of the TREE of HERMES

Tarot where from the first to the last it is the journey of the Fool; here in the **NUR Tarot** we find the journey of **Khidr** (from the first to the final **Major Arcana** of this deck) in the form of his journey to his Beloved who is the manifestation of the eternal Divine Feminine: the Divine Feminine who traverses trajectories of time, space, civilizations and cultures appearing in the forms of numerous goddesses of antiquity; and following the decline and fall of the high pagan civilizations, in the Judeo-Christian-Islamic one as the Shekinah, the Theotokos, Fāṭima, or as the figure of the *Sāqī* (wine bearer) in Sufism.¹⁵ This is because, as

its Tree of Life when an older man with a long white beard looking exactly like our self some 12-13 years from that point in the future - and dressed only in a single green cloak and nothing else - approached us from the front of the Tree of Life taking off his green cloak from his own shoulders and then placing it upon ours. Throughout he had his back to the Tree of Life facing us while we were facing him and the Tree of Life, which was directly behind him. No words were exchanged in the dream except that as we were waking up the word **Ahūyaman** (أهويمن) - viz. the **NUR-FSO Hexagrammaton** (a compound of the Avestan *āhū* and the Arabic *yamana*) - was being repeated in our mind over and over again like a *dhikr* invocation, see **Liber Dectriarchia Mystica** unities 3 and 4. The cloak is the *khirqā* (initiatory mantle); green is the color of **Khidr**; the older man with the white beard is **Khidr** himself; his appearance in the **Valley of NUR** near the Tree of Life represents the station of the *blaze-flux* (*maqām al-fu'ād*) - which in Shaykhī pneumatology is equivalent to Being/Existence (*wujūd*) - but within a *geosophical* visionary context occurring in the angelic world of *malakūt*, since that Valley with its Tree has acted in the Dreaming state since we first encountered it as our personal *axis mundi* as well as *qibla* (point of adoration). His resemblance during that timeline to an older version of our self is the possibility offered by that initiatic transmission occurring in the *‘ālam al-mithāl* of attaining the station of the **Khidr-of-ones-being** in order to fully develop the capacity (*isti'dād*), together with the necessary visionary faculty, of beholding the Eternal Beloved in one's horizons and one's soul through specifically *khidrīan* eyes, since the eyes of **Khidr** can see beyond even where some of God's own elect messengers can see, as the Quranic narrative amply confirms. Finally, for the purposes of this book, each letter of the **NUR-FSO Hexagrammaton** - in its associations with the relevant sigils of the **Greatest Name** - represents here the twenty-eight trump cards, the eight median cards and four suits of the **NUR Tarot** from the **Major Arcana** to the final suit of **Earth** of the **Minor Arcana**, see below. Of course, during that period of 2006, we were also constantly reflecting upon the mysteries of **Sūrah al-Kahf** (the Cave: 18) day and night. But among a few other reasons, this dream of **Khidr** from 2006 is why this book is named as it is, so it was important to mention that here.

¹⁵ As our collaborator and the artist for these **Major Arcana** cards once indicated, it should give pause to anyone when considering that the oval shape of the Islamic *mihrāb* (prayer niche) bears a striking resemblance to the geometric form of a woman, 'the Woman', for She is explicitly depicted in countless pre-Islamic designs as occurring within the arch of the *mihrāb* such as a few Sassanian ones or some of those syncretic depictions of Aphrodite-Anāhīta from late antiquity. In the Sufi poetry of Hāfiẓ especially, She is described as being present in the *mihrāb*, particularly her eyebrows which are reminiscent of its 'arch'. Also, note Bihzād of Herat's (d. 1535) depiction of Laylī in red unveiled within the mosque's prayer niche from an

The BOOK of the TREE of HERMES

a maxim of Iranian Sufism holds, the reality of the Beloved can only ever be known through the eyes of the Lover! Given this, here **Khidr** stands as Her most faithful mediator and hierophant, and so the ultimate figure among the hidden, trans-historical *ecclesia* of the *fedeli d'amore* (the lieges of Love) as their chief (*ra'īs*), the eternal object of whose devotion is *already-always* the Divine Feminine in Her innumerable theophanic personifications encompassing all forms and all civilizations; for it is She Who is the Initiatrix into the highest Mysteries which are the mysteries of Herself as the Divine Face of the One without peer or equal turned to creation (the meaning of the Fāṭimīya *shahada*)¹⁶ signifying thereby the esoteric Tawḥīd of a *religio perennis*, even the manifestation of the Primordial Tradition itself. The following poem by us, entitled '**Asherah**',¹⁷ also conveys the meaning of the above:

Wonder,
The thundering of a Perfect Mind --
A station among the Flames!
My Heart is but the Mirror
To the infinite forms of my Divine Mother,
The manifestations of the Tree of Life --

important miniature of his for Nizāmī's *khamsih* tale of Laylī and Majnūn, see BL (British Library) Or.6819, folio.106v. Countless other Persianate examples can be furnished depicting the Eternal Goddess within the *mihrāb* proving thereby that She never actually left the Islamic lands, but was rather fully incorporated while being openly camouflaged in many local forms of its piety, in architecture, art, poetry, mysticism and even theosophical speculation. In our view, it is in an unabashed devotion to Her that can ultimately save the Islamic world from itself at such a perilous time as this – or, conversely, ultimately destroy it if it persists in its misguided theological misogyny. This goes just as well for the other two Abrahamic faiths as well.

¹⁶ *Lā ilāha illa allāh, fāṭima wajh allāh* (لا إله إلا الله فاطمة وجه الله), 'there is no god but God, and Fāṭima is the Face of God'.

¹⁷ Which is inspired by a famous poem by Ibn 'Arabī from his the **Interpreter of Desire** (*tarjumān al-ashwāq*).

The BOOK of the TREE of HERMES

*The Tree of Reality!**The Radiance of my Daughter**The Stature of Roya**The Emerald-Green Eyes of Narges**An icon of Mary**The figure of Kālī**Fāṭima's Green Veil!**I am but the Adam of the lieges of Love (fedeli d'amore)**In the path of the Eternal Eve**Where unitarianism (tawḥīd) and idolatry (shirk) are the same,**For wheresoever I turn,**There is Her Face!**So I say, there is no other divinity but Her (lā ilāha illā hīya)**As neither a muslim nor an idolater am I**For wheresoever Her Light may Dawn from Pre-Eternity,**Illuminating the Talismanic-Temples of Unicity,**There is my creed**My Eternal Beloved**The Greatest Name!*

Note as well the longstanding connection of **Khidr** in Iranian lore to the Zoroastrian angel-goddess of the waters, **Ardevī Sūra Anāhīta** or Nāhīd (i.e. Venus), and their sometimes interchangeability among contemporary Iranian Zoroastrians who refer to him as *pīr-i-sabz*

The BOOK of the TREE of HERMES

(‘the Green Master’ or ‘the green old man’).¹⁸ We will later overtly encounter this conjunction between **Khidr** and Anāhita in the sixteenth card of this **Major Arcana** in the card of **Burj** (the Tower), such conjunction and final union between **Khidr** and the Eternal Goddess being the entire thematic trajectory of the trump cards of the **Major Arcana**.

Thus, the **NUR Tarot** attempts to convey through the vision of **Khidr** a *harmonia paganorum Abrahamica*¹⁹ with the figure of the Divine Feminine as the proverbial ‘confluence of the two lights’ (*majma’ al-nūrayn*)²⁰ between paganism and monotheism; as it were, an alchemical coincidence between two outward opposites - a theological *solve et coagula*, if you would - on the level of two religious civilizations and two historical theologies seemingly at complete odds with one another in their approach to the question of the One in the many and many in the One yet, as all high adepts have always known, inwardly in *harmonia*. Such is a meaning to the ‘Tree of Hermes’ as well as why only the *religio perennis* of a *fedeli d’amore*, in whatever form it has appeared, is ever capable of resolving such outward contradictions by first raising it to the level of paradox and then making this *coincidentia oppositorum* the alchemical leaven of its own lived experience in the progressive realization of the One in the horizons of its soul. Therefore, all of the **Major Arcana** cards here, including the first, are the vision of **Khidr** journeying within himself towards his beloved, the Eternal Goddess, Who is the Pole (*quṭb*), the beginning, the middle as well as the end of the quest and who in the doctrine of the **NUR-FSO** stands as ‘*She whom God shall*

¹⁸ Kathryn Babayan *Mystics, Monarchs and Messiahs: Cultural Landscapes of Early Modern Iran* (Harvard University Press: Harvard, 2002): 368.

¹⁹ Two major figures epitomize this *harmonia paganorum Abrahamica* within the greater *Islamaic* constellation of things: one is Shihābuddīn Yaḥyā Suhrawardī, the Master of Illumination (d. 1191), with the other being the Primal Point, the Bāb (d. 1850).

²⁰ Being an actual epithet of Fāṭima in Shi‘ite Islam as the confluence between the two lights of prophecy (*nubuwwa*) and providential guidance (*wilāya*); that is, Her Father and Her Husband.

make Manifest' (hīya yuḏhiruhā' Llāh),²¹ the Primal Eve and Eternal Fāṭima as One, to Whose visionary encounter and metaphysical embrace all of the illuminated *adepti* of this Path seek and aspire towards unto **303** as its culmination.

The Depiction of the Card

Here in the depiction of this card of **Khiḍr**, first, the background is set in two shades of blue. Per the color scheme of the **NUR Tarot**, blue is the color of the **primordial body** (i.e. **Jism A** of Shaykhī pneumatology)²² that in our arrangement corresponds to the world of 'azamūt (the Mighteous realm)²³ which is a sub-realm of the angelic world of *malakūt* wherein occurs the celestial paradise (*janna*) and celestial hell (*jahannam*) such that entry into one or the other – particularly in the postmortem state - is completely dependent on the reflexive causality of the cumulative thoughts, words, actions and choices made by the individual. Since 'as Above, so below', the archetypal reality of this realm is as relevant in the *here and now* of the aspirant's spatiotemporal experience as it is in the postmortem state when the soul detaches from the **elemental body** (**Jasad A**) such that the **primordial body** is

²¹ هي يظهرها الله, whose Arabic numerical value of **1202** is equivalent to one of the many Arabic spellings for the name of the goddess Ishtār (which actually appears as an arabized form of the Hebrew 'Asherah' that itself is a lone word indicating Ishtār), i.e. الاشترع. Another spelling is الاتشعر whose numerical value is the same as the preceding. Contrary to appearances, this element of the **NUR-FSO** doctrine is not the same as what Thelema or Aleister Crowley consider regarding the Scarlet Woman, BABALON, which appears to us as a complete disfiguration of the notion of the Eternal Goddess, whether taken from its pagan Afro-Asiatic angle or from the Hindu-Vedic and Tantric one as well.

²² See Henry Corbin's *Spiritual Body and Celestial Earth: From Mazdean Iran to Shi'ite Iran*, Trans. Nancy Pearson (Princeton University Press, Princeton: 1977): 180-221, esp. 202-3. Thanks to Idris Samawi Hamid's erudite exposition, the terminology translated here denoting the four 'alchemical bodies of Resurrection' in Shaykhī pneumatology have been changed somewhat from how Corbin and his translator have rendered it.

²³ عظموت. This realm as a sub-section of *malakūt* - and with minimal gloss and explanation - was first introduced as an augmentation to the scheme of the five Divine Presences and worlds in Islamic esotericism in the writings of the Primal Point and Ṣubḥ-i-Azal (d. 1912).

The BOOK of the TREE of HERMES

presently located in *that* world right now already, as it were, filtering its experiences of *this* world here through whichever of the two of its *loci* it occupies - or oscillates between - at any given time. Thus, in this card, as well as all the others following it in the **Major Arcana**, whenever blue occurs this tension and dichotomous ambiguity in between *paradise* and *inferno*, delight and torment, is being conveyed throughout including when waters are being depicted, even though the color scheme for the element of **Water** in our Tarot is properly green. This is also meant to convey the concept of the ‘still’ and ‘corrosive’ waters in alchemy that likewise communicates what the reality of this realm of ‘*azamūt*’ represents in our system. In other words, blue and the realm it corresponds to in the **NUR Tarot** is amphibolous and Janus-faced, a point that should always be kept in mind during divinations with this as well as all the other trump cards whenever it occurs. And note how the color scheme for the **Middle Arcana** of the **NUR Tarot** is completely blue in color.

Now, here **Khidr** is seated upon a violet blue colored fish riding through the air above the waters. This specific representation is a popular iconographical depiction of him in Bihar and Bengal in the sub-continent where he was once jointly venerated by Hindus and Muslims alike, with a shrine specifically devoted to him in Bakhar near the Indus.²⁴ Coomaraswamy indicates that Hindu veneration of **Khidr** included him in the pantheon of deities where he is “...worshiped with lights and feeding Brahmans at a well.”²⁵ As the card indicating **0° of Aries** to **12° 51’ of Aries** (see below), this illustration also represents the transition of **Pisces** (the Fish) – a water sign – into **Aries** such that **Aries** *qua* **Khidr** in this depiction - for the purposes of this specific card - is ascendent over **Pisces** and so seated upon the fish, this denoting cyclical renewal from the previous year or cycle (*dawr*) that has

²⁴ Ananda K. Coomaraswamy ‘*Khāwaja Khadr and the Fountain of Life, in the Tradition of Persian and Mughal Art*’ in *What is Civilization? And other Essays* (Lindisfarne Press: Great Barrington, 1989): 157.

²⁵ Ibid.

The BOOK of the TREE of HERMES

phased into the new. While exhausting the symbolism of the fish would take us too far afield for present purposes, we should mention that ‘fish’ in itself can also sometimes symbolize with renewal and rebirth, prosperity and the like, not to mention the submerging of the faithful into the waters of eternal life - or baptism - in a few Christian perspectives. And, of course, the Greek letters of ἰχθύς (*ikhthūs*, meaning ‘fish’) was a 1st-2nd century CE Christian acrostic for *Iēsoûs, Khrīstós, Theoû Huiós, Sōtēr* (Jesus, the Anointed Son of God, Savior). In **Qur’ān 37: 139-48**, ‘fish’ appears in the form of Jonah’s whale who acts as a divine instrument of repentance from sin, notably of Jonah’s own. As a water animal linked to the element **Water**, in our system ‘fish’ is *malakūtī* so of *angelic*-type and thus a symbol of angelic gnosis and the knowledge of angelophanies.

On the bottom right, below our fish and in the waters, a vessel is depicted. This is the ship which **Khiḍr** punctured and damaged per **Qur’an 18:71**. Imprinted upon the vessel’s sail there is the triangular form of one dot above two. First, this represents a basic geomantic formula such that two dots below indicate ‘body’ and ‘water’ with the dot above indicating ‘head’ and ‘fire’. Second, the triple-pearl ornament – which is often depicted in the triangular form of one dot above two as well as conversely as two dots above one – is a symbol of the angel-goddess Anāhīta²⁶ who, as mentioned, among the Iranian Zoroastrians is explicitly associated with **Khiḍr**. Third, the number three according to the Brethren of Purity of Basra (*ikhwān al-ṣafā’*) is the number associated with the Universal Soul (*nafs kullī*).²⁷ Fourth, among its collections, the British Museum holds an Iranian miniature painting from the 17th century CE period of the Safavid era depicting a dervish with triple

²⁶ See Abolala Soudavar *Mithraic Societies: From Brotherhood Ideal to Religion’s Adversary* (Self-publication: 2014), **Fig. 23: 21**.

²⁷ René Guénon *Fundamental Symbols: The Universal Language of Sacred Science* (Quinta Essentia: Cambridge, 1995): 75.

burn marks in the form of three dots, two of which are two dots above one.²⁸ This is an explicitly initiatic sign, and specifically of a Qalandar. Fifth, one dot above two or three dots in general instances the foundational Zoroastrian credo of ‘**Humata, Hūkhta, Huvarshta**’ (Good Thoughts, Good Actions, Good Deeds). Sixth, in Freemasonry either one dot above two or its converse is meant to evoke (as well as invoke) the power of these points as a triangle.²⁹ Seventh, per a recent critical edition of the *shams al-ma‘ārif* (the Great Sun of Gnosés) of al-Būnī,³⁰ both lunar mansions of *al-sharṭayn* (the Two Signs) as well as the succeeding *al-buṭayn* (the Belly) - associated with the following trump card of the **Imām-Creatrix** - share this geomantic figure of one dot above two in common.³¹ The implications of this are pivotal to the **NUR Tarot’s Major Arcana**.

Note here how it is as if the vessel is sailing away from the waters of the card, and it also bears an open eye at its front looking at a horizon beyond itself. This horizon beyond that it is looking towards is the card of the **Imām-Creatrix**. And whereas the fish is looking up at **Khidr**, the vessel is looking away from him. This instances a central point of Shaykhī ontology³² such that essence (‘ayn/māhīya) looks upon itself – i.e. the fish looking up to **Khidr** – whereas *being/existence* (wujūd) looks upon its Lord – i.e. the vessel looking away to a greater horizon – which in this case is its *Mistress*, the **Imām-Creatrix**, for She is the true Mover of the whole **Major Arcana** of the **NUR Tarot**.

²⁸ Soudavar *Mithraic Societies: From Brotherhood Ideal to Religion’s Adversary*, *ibid.*, **Fig. 22:** 21.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ Jaime Coullaut Cordero *El Kitāb Šams al-Ma‘ārif al-Kubra (al-ŷuz’ al-awwal) de Aḥmad b. ‘Alī al-Būnī: Sufismo y ciencias ocultas*, PhD thesis, University of Salamanca, 2009: 31; see especially the appendix at page 553 where this is shown across four of the oldest **MSS**.

³¹ The first being the formula **2+1** with the other being **3**.

³² See Idris Samawi Hamid *The Metaphysics and Cosmology of Process According to Shaykh Aḥmad al-Aḥsā’ī: Critical Edition, Translation, and Analysis of Observations in Wisdom*, Ph.D dissertation, SUNY-Buffalo, 1998.

The BOOK of the TREE of HERMES

And, eighth, the principle of triad and monad, the three main worlds of Being (i.e. One, Intellect and Soul or the Divine World, the Intelligible world and the created world), the star Sirius, the two poles of a dialectic and their synthesis, not to mention the Triple Goddess, are also all simultaneously being symbolized here by these three dots. That the vessel occurs on the right-hand instances the locus of these corresponding and symbolized archetypes as occurring on the **Pillar of Beauty** (*rukn al-jamāl*) of the Tree of Reality; and note what was said above regarding *al-sharṭayn* and *al-buṭayn* (together with the cards they represent) as sharing in common the same geomantic figure.

To the right of **Khidr** is found a depiction of **Qur'ān 18:74** in its aftermath - a depiction quite reminiscent of Shakespeare's **Hamlet Act 5, Scene 1**³³ - with a father figure donning an orange colored dervish *ṭāj* and dressed in a reddish brown (the color of the element **Earth**) looking over the skull of his slain son in a state of tranquil repose. In its esoteric trajectory, this depiction denotes the slaying of the lower nature - or the ego inclining towards evil (*nafs al-ammāra bi'l-sū'*) of **Qur'ān 12:53** - with the dervish father looking on as the 'confirmed soul' or the 'soul at peace' (*nafs al-mutma'ina*) of **Qur'ān 89:27**, around whose head is formed a blue halo (= '*aẓamūt*'). To the left is depicted the events of **Qur'ān 18:77** and **82** wherein, first, is seen the repaired wall underneath which is located the concealed treasure belonging to the orphans, here represented in the same geomantic form of one dot above two as the lunar mansion ascribed to this and the next card - and in the color yellow (denoting the element of Fire, the realm of *jabarūt* and the Spirit). Then, sitting beside it to its left, is an old man dressed in black looking forlorn and dejected around whose head forms a green halo (= *malakūt*). This is Moses of **Qur'ān 18:64-82**, here

³³ "Alas, poor Yorick! I knew him, Horatio..."

The BOOK of the TREE of HERMES

representative of the defeat of nomocentric exotericism in the victory over it by esotericism which is epitomized in the figure of **Khidr**.

Now to turn to the depiction of **Khidr** himself: as are the usual illustrations of him, it should be noted here that **Khidr** is not portrayed completely in green, nor as an old man with a white beard. Even though the literal denotation of the name in Arabic would generally imply being green due to the name being derived from the name of the color, yet as the Verdant One **Khidr** can potentially be in any color he chooses to be (or even multiples of them) associated with being verdant. Here he is represented in green, red, brown, black, purple, blue, orange, and bearing fairly light olive skin. Nor, for that matter, do the relevant verses of the Qur'ān say anything about the color of **Khidr**'s beard or the apparent demeanor of his age. His basic depiction here is given in the form of **Utnapishtim** from the *Epic of Gilgamesh* but while donning a **Qizilbash** dervish *tāj* ('cap' or 'crown') with a green sash tied around it, which in either the Sufisms of Iranian Shi'ism or the Turkish Alevi-Bektashi one denotes spiritual authority connected to (whether directly by blood genealogy or otherwise by spiritual transmission) to the holy Imāms and the Family of Muḥammad.

Khidr's bearing is illustrated here as being at the same time both stern as well as serene. The verticality of the depiction of his face together with his beard form the letter *alif* (ʾ) whilst also conveying the 'Above, below' notion of the vertical as such. At his center, **Khidr** dons the eight-pointed star of the Mesopotamian goddess Ishtar which in the **Major Arcana** trumps of the **NUR Tarot** also stands for the ogdoadic form of the calligram of the **Greatest Name**. In his left-hand he is holding, as it were, the World Egg. As the divine anthropos, the form of the **Assyrian Tree of Life** is shaped around and above him,

The BOOK of the TREE of HERMES

symbolized by petals, and in the traditional nine.³⁴ The first point where the center of his red dervish *tāj* is located is the crown, corresponding to our 1st sphere, **the Living** (*al-ḥayy*). The three horizontal petals on his right and then his left going down vertically are next, corresponding to the 2nd, the 5th, the 6th, the 7th, the 9th and the 10th spheres of our Tree of Reality.³⁵ The center where the star of Ishtar is located corresponds to the 8th sphere of ours, which is **the Mighty** (*al-ʿazīm*).

Next, four vertical petals protrude from each side of **Khidr**'s shoulders, two from the right and two from the left, with seven petals forming an arc around his head as the halo around him. The number four here represents the esoteric reality of the **Theophanic Praise of Fāṭima** (*tasbīḥ al-fāṭima*)³⁶ and the basic foundational number forming the *tetraktys* with the number seven being the heptad in all of its significations. The number four and seven when added yields the sum of 11 which is the *abjad* numerical value of *hūwa* (هو)³⁷ with the number 47 itself being the number associated with the angel of the 1st sphere: the angel *Bābāʾil*. On his right and left arms as well as his right and left legs are pelican-looking formations which are actually depictions of the **Sīmorgh** or Gryphon.

Finally here, the element Air is portrayed emanating from either side of **Khidr**; and on the beach side of the waters behind him, the waters are depicted as being choppy while the waters above which **Khidr** travels are calm. This choppiness of the waters behind him represents the effects of the acts of **Khidr** while the calmness above through which he

³⁴ See Simo Parpola "The Assyrian Tree of Life: Tracing the Origins of Jewish Monotheism and Greek Philosophy," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*, Vol. 52, No. 3 (University of Chicago: July, 1993): 161-208, esp. 186, b. fig 9.

³⁵ That is, **the Light** (*al-nūr*), **the Knowing** (*al-ʿalīm*), **the Holy** (*al-quddūs*), **the Peerless** (*al-qayyūm*), **the Magnanimous** (*al-laṭīf*) and **the Victorious** (*al-qahhār*).

³⁶ I.e. 'Glory be to God, praise be unto God, there is no god but God, and God is the Most Great' (*subḥān'ullāh wa'l-ḥamdulillāh wa lā ilāha illa allāh wa allāhu akbar*) (سبحان الله والحمد لله ولا إله إلا الله والله أكبر).

³⁷ The masculine pronoun 'he' in Arabic which we have usually rendered with the English neutral 'it'.

travels represents the serene nature of the divine actor who performed them. In some ways, this specific depiction harkens back to a particular element of the depicted symbolism of the Fool in the conventional Tarot (such as the well-known one in the Rider Waite deck) except expressed in a subtly different way.

The Fāṭimīya Hexagrammaton as the formula of the NUR Tarot

As mentioned in **footnote 15** above, the Name **Ahūyaman** (آهوين) forms the *hexagrammaton* of the **NUR-FSO** doctrine. Outwardly, this divine name is a compound of the **93rd** Name among the 101 Zoroastrian Names of God, *ahū* – meaning, according to Panaino, “overlord”³⁸ – and the Arabic *yamana* (يَمَن) ³⁹ which implies ‘approached from the right, led to the right, placed on the right’, etc. We have already delineated the aspects of angelology associated with this Name in *Liber Nomeni Angelis* and so will not repeat here the details already given over there. However, where the Tree of Reality is concerned, ‘existence approached from the right’ refers to the right-hand pillar of the Tree of Reality which is the **Pillar of Beauty** (*rukṇ al-jamāl*), and in our system - contrary to the sephirotic Tree of Life of conventional Kabbalah, which is directly the opposite - is associated with the feminine and so our Eternal Goddess. The six letters of **Ahūyaman** (أ ه و ي م ن) ⁴⁰ are also the

³⁸ Antonio Panaino *The List of Names of Ahura Mazda* (Istituto italiano per l’Africa e l’Oriente: Rome, 2002): 130. Others have glossed the meaning of this Avestan name as “Existence itself, the one and only” <<https://parsi-times.com/2017/04/101-names-ahura-mazda-meanings/>> (retrieved 23 February 2023) as well as “Lord of Existence” <https://www.ahuramazda.com/pages/101_names_of_ahuramazda_.html> (retrieved 23 February 2023).

³⁹ With *sukūn* after the *nūn* (ن) in the pronunciation of the Name.

⁴⁰ Five of its letters being among the **luminous letters** (حروف التورانية) with the **wāw** (و) as the single letter among the grouping of **darkened letter** (حروف الظلمانية). In their traditional elemental correspondences with the Arabic

The BOOK of the TREE of HERMES

letters forming the first six pathways of the Tree of Reality, five of which are vertically connected to its first Sphere, **the Living** (*al-ḥayy*), with the final letter horizontally connecting the second Sphere, **the Light** (*al-nūr*), to the third, **the Wise** (*al-ḥakīm*). In the **NUR-FSO, Ahūyaman** (أهوين), on its own, constitutes a unique divine Name. Additionally, the secret Name of the Divine Mother is embedded amongst three of its letters. Its *abjad* numerical value of 112 also aligns with the number assigned to the **Sūrah al-Ikhlāṣ** of the **Qurʾān** – that **sūrah** consisting of precisely 66 letters to the *abjad* numerical value of *allāh* (الله) – which at the time served as an invocatory basis to the author of this book for the Revelation of the Tree of Reality in 2005.⁴¹

Now, in our arrangement, the letter **alif** (ا) of **Ahūyaman** corresponds to the second sigil of the calligram of the **Greatest Name** ۞; the letter **hāʾ** (هـ) to the third ۞; the letter **wāw** (و) to the fourth ۞; the letter **yāʾ** (ي) to the fifth ۞; the letter **mīm** (م) to the sixth ۞; and the letter **nūn** (ن) to the seventh ۞. We mention here that the attribution of the *sawāqit*⁴² by the Islamic occult tradition (and especially by al-Būnī and his successors in turn) to the individual sigils of the **Greatest Name** has never made any sense to us since any letters corresponding to - and so forming - the **Greatest Name** must by definition occur within al-

letters, **alif** (ا) is assigned to **Fire**; **hāʾ** (هـ) to **Air**; **wāw** (و) to **Fire**; **yāʾ** (ي) to **Air**; **mīm** (م) to **Earth**; and **nūn** (ن) to **Water**.

⁴¹ The letters of **Ahūyaman** (أهوين), in turn, occur within the 112th **sūrah** of the **Qurʾān**, and especially between its first, third and fourth verses. Note how we left out the second verse, and then note the numerical value of the 'Everlasting' (*ṣamad*) (حمد) which is 134 and is equivalent to **Ahūyaman** (أهوين) plus two *hūwas* (هو) (112 + 11 + 11), these indicating the right and left-hand pentalphas of the ogdoadic form of the **Greatest Name** which in the trump cards are instead depicted as the eight-pointed Star of Ishtar.

⁴² Namely, those seven letters of the Arabic alphabet not appearing in the first chapter of the **Qurʾān**:

ف ج ح ذ ظ خ ز

The BOOK of the TREE of HERMES

fātiḥa. These six letters composing the Name **Ahūyaman** are in fact found in the **Qur’ān**’s opening **sūrah**.

That said, each of the six sigils of the **Greatest Name** indicated above then correspond to the main trump cards, the eight median cards and each of the four suits of the **NUR Tarot**: 𐄂 (“three sticks in a row...above them the semblance of a straightened lance”) with the **Major Arcana**; ۞ (“a blind *mīm*”) with the **Middle Arcana**; # (“a ladder unto all that which is hoped for, but which is not a ladder”) with the **Minor Arcana** suit of **Air** whose color white is associated with the Divine realm of *lāhūt* and the blaze-flux (*fu’ād*); 𐄃 (“four things pointing to good deeds but without a wrist”) with the **Minor Arcana** suit of **Fire** whose color yellow is associated with the Empyrean realm of *jabarūt* and the spirit (*rūh*); ھ (“a *hā*’ which hath been split”) with the **Minor Arcana** suit of **Water** whose color green is associated with the angelic realm of *malakūt* and the soul (*nafs*); and 𐄄 (“an inverted *wāw* like the syphon of a phlebotomist, but not a blood-letting cup”) with the **Minor Arcana** suit of **Earth** whose color red is associated with the material world and the elemental body (*jasad*).

These above then correspond to one of the six names and one of the six theophanic stations of the *ḥadīth al-ḥaqīqa* (the tradition of Ultimate Reality) of ‘Alī: the **Major Arcana** with the divine Name ‘Single’ (فرد) (*fard*) and ‘the Disclosures of the Majesties of Glorification without indication’ (كشف سبحات الجلال من غير إشارة); the **Middle Arcana** with the divine Name ‘Alive’ (حي) (*ḥayy*) and ‘the negation of all speculation and the realization of the Known’ (محو الموهوم وصحو المعلوم); the suit of **Air** of the **Minor Arcana** with the divine Name ‘Peerless Self-Subsistent’ (قيوم) (*qayyūm*) and ‘the splitting of the covering by the victorious rending of the veil off the mystery of the secret’ (هتك الستر لغلبة السر); the suit of **Fire** of the **Minor Arcana** with the divine Name ‘Judge’ (حك) (*ḥakam*) and ‘the attraction of the Divine Exclusive Oneness by the attributive apprehension of

The BOOK of the TREE of HERMES

the Divine Unicity (جذب الأحدية لصفة التوحيد); the suit of **Water** of the **Minor Arcana** with the divine Name 'Just' (عدل) ('adl) and 'a Light illuminating from the Dawn of Pre-Eternity shedding its traces upon the Talismanic-Temples of Unicity' (نورٌ أشرق من صبح الأزل فيلوح هياكل التوحيد آثاره); and, finally, the suit of **Earth** of the **Minor Arcana** with the divine Name 'Holy' (قدّوس) (quddūs) and 'extinguish the lamp for the Dawn hath indeed arisen' (أطفئ السراج فقد طلع الصبح).

Finally, we mention here that the color black in our scheme corresponds to the realm of the hidden Ipseity which is *hāhūt*. From one angle, this last one can now be made to correspond to the right-hand pentalpha of the calligram of the **Greatest Name**, thus giving us its heptadic form.⁴³

The Associations of the Card of Khidr in Divination

In the doctrine of the **NUR-FSO** and its Tarot, the three Arabic letters of **Khidr** stand as an acrostic for three of the divine Names amongst the **385** divine Names of the **Supreme Names**:⁴⁴ the letter *khā'* (خ) for *khāfi* (خافي) ('the concealer' or 'hidden'), the letter *ḍāl* (ض) for *ḍāmin* (ضامن) (guarantor), and the letter *rā'* (ر) for *rā'i* (رائي) (seer) which can also mean 'divine'. Note that in its correspondences, the first Name⁴⁵ is associated with the 6th day of the fifth **NUR** month – Bāb (gate) – and the element **Air**, glorification (*tasbīh*) and so the Divine realm of *lāhūt*. The second Name *ḍāmin* (guarantor)⁴⁶ is associated with the 21st day of the seventh

⁴³ The pentagram/pentalpha by itself, in our system which follows the Bayānic schema for this symbol, is in all cases *hūwa* (هو), i.e. 'he' or 'it'.

⁴⁴ The number **385** itself being the *gematria* of Shekinah (שְׁכִינָה) in Hebrew. The prayer of the **385 Supreme Names** is provided in the **second gate of the Nineteenth Unity of the Completion of the Bayān**.

⁴⁵ Being the 118th Name of the Supreme Names.

⁴⁶ The 189th Name.

The BOOK of the TREE of HERMES

NUR month – Truly Real (*ḥaqq*) – the element Water, the tesification to the Divine Unity (*tahlīl*) and so the angelic world of *malakūt*. The third divine Name, representing the final letter of **Khidr**, which is *rāʾī* (seer),⁴⁷ is associated with the 22nd day of the sixth **NUR** month – Vicegerency or Providential Guidance (*wilāya*) – the element **Earth**, magnification (*takbīr*) and so the material world of *nāsūt*.

Within the Tree of Reality this card of **Khidr** is associated with the letter **alif** (ʾ) which is the first pathway of the Tree stationed on the **Column of Balance** occurring within the Divine Realm as well as the Empyreans of Power (*lāhūt* and *jabarūt*) connecting the first Sphere, **the Living** (*al-ḥayy*), with the eighth, **the Mighty** (*al-ʿazīm*). In *Liber Nomeni Angelis* the letter **alif** (ʾ) is associated with the planetary sigil of the sun ☉ whose angelic correspondence is the angel *Lāʾāʾīl*, i.e. the first among the angelic sovereign chiefs who is the masculine Intelligence of *sol*. This angel is the first instantiation of the logoic exposition (*bayān*) in the locus of the distinctive entification of the cosmic pen (*qalam*) and is of the longitudinal order of angelophanies belonging to the angelic concourse of **Ruqīyāʾīl**, the concourse associated with the right-hand pentalpha of the calligram of the **Greatest Name**. *Lāʾāʾīl* represents the theophany of the *angelic air* and the angelophany of the divine Name *One* (*aḥad*) as the instantiation of the divine Name *Single* (*fard*). It is the epiphanic setting-placement (*mawqīʿ*) of the **Universal Intellect** (*ʿaql kull*) and so the angel of the **NUR** day Temple (*haykal*), viz. Sunday. As with the other cards following it in this **Major Arcana** of the **NUR Tarot**, the remaining associations for this letter and its angel as given in *Liber Nomeni Angelis* should also be taken into consideration.⁴⁸ But an important association

⁴⁷ And is the 162nd Name of the Supreme Names.

⁴⁸ We mention here that the letter **alif** (ʾ) in our system also represents the day in between the ending and commencement of each normal **NUR** year as the **NUR** year is 364 days (13x28) to the *abjad* numerical value of the ‘True Light’ (*nūr-i-ḥaqq*) (نور حق).

and correspondence for our purposes here, which is not given in that text but is provided here instead, is that this letter and card is associated with the first **Lunar Mansion** which is *al-sharṭayn* (the Two Signs). The gesture made by the right hand of **Khidr** with the forefinger and middle extended pointing downward indicates this.⁴⁹

Al-sharṭayn (the Two Signs), as the first Lunar Mansion and the traditional ruler over the letter *alif* (ʾ), occurs between **0° of Aries** to **12° 51' of Aries**. It is virile, solar and masculine with the astrological sign itself belonging to the element of **Fire** as does, traditionally, the letter. Its name derives from the two horns of the Ram represented by the constellation. In the *shams al-maʿārif*, al-Būnī (d. 1225 CE) states that “...whensoever *al-sharṭayn* (the Two Signs) descends upon the moon, as it is fiery, one performs in it those activities related to wordly matters, even [acts of] corruption and the shedding of blood...”⁵⁰ He holds such activities as being especially auspicious when it is expressly performed by women in a specifically theurgical setting (*rūḥāniya*), implying thereby angry, violent magical curses when cast at kings, rulers and the like.⁵¹ In that regard, note here especially the story of **Khidr** and Moses, and what **Khidr** does to raise Moses’s ire without Moses comprehending the inner purpose therein, because *al-sharṭayn* like **Khidr** can appear outwardly as fire and brimstone but whose actions and/or influence can be inwardly light and mercy, much like magical curses directed at tyrannical potentates, corrupt rulers or officials. This amphibolous nature, or Janus-face, is present in all of the **Major Arcana** cards of the **NUR Tarot**, but with this card especially. So during all divinations this point should always be kept firmly in mind.

⁴⁹ In Yoga this gesture is also a one-handed form of the *prāṇa mudra*, viz. the hand gesture associated with the breath of life, the vital principle, and the life-force in general, which can be correlated to Vāyū: the Hindu god of the winds or the deity of life who like Hermes in Greek mythology is a messenger between the gods and humanity.

⁵⁰ (Beirut: 1420 AH/2000 CE): 24 (my trans.)

⁵¹ Cordero edition, *ibid.*, 31 (my trans.)

The BOOK of the TREE of HERMES

Al-Būnī goes on to advise that theurgists (*al-ḥukamāʾ*) – even physicians, philosophers or whoever deems themselves to be among the wise – ought to refrain from all activities during this time, counseling rest and sleep instead; but if sleep is to be avoided then the necessity of observing silence from speaking about anything during this time unless it be absolutely necessary.⁵² Yet if any activities are to be undertaken, these should be acts of ostensible evil directed towards those deserving them like what **Khiḍr** does. He also says that whoever is born under the mansion of *al-sharṭayn* can over time (that is, if they are unmindful) become extremely corrupt – meaning, in their spirit, in their morality and personal ethic – just like the boy whose life **Khiḍr** had to take in order to save his parents from a potential ordeal down the road per the Quranic story.⁵³

Under its lunar influence, *al-sharṭayn* is generally held to cause discord. But it is also held to initiate journeys and so a good time to commence voyages of any description. Because it occurs immediately following the Spring Equinox in the northern hemisphere, planting and/or buying cattle and livestock are recommended at this specific time. As such *al-sharṭayn* as **Khiḍr** is both Shiva the Destroyer as well as Shiva the Creator, since from such destruction always emerges a new creation, within or without. It is, in a sense, the purification by fire – or, as is the case with the name of **Khiḍr**, specifically purification by the elements of **Air**, **Water** and **Earth**. All momentous paths of spiritual opening and enlightenment have usually begun in such fashion, and all those who have arrogantly thought they had grasped the greater divine intent of things – but actually hadn't – are usually chastened in such fashion by either a **Khiḍr**-like being or a **Khiḍr**-like circumstance just like Moses was in the Quranic story. This is also as a consequence of the dual nature of

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Ibid.

‘Light’ (nūr) itself such that it can either burn in the form of fire or illuminate as Light.⁵⁴ In essence, therefore, one of the underlying messages behind this card is the importance of shedding all self-generated illusions and delusions - together with the turbid veils they generate, whatever else one thinks about oneself - in order to possess the ability to behold ‘the reality of things as they truly are’ like **Khidr**⁵⁵ so that ‘light’ (nūr) does not become that agency that negatively burns the wayfarer or querent but instead positively illuminates her to the ‘True’ and the ‘Real’ (ḥaqq). Such is also the mystery of the two phrases of testification to the divine Unicity of the One (tahlīl) – i.e. ‘there is no god/lā ilāha’ (= fire and negation) ‘other than God/illa allāh’ (= Light and Affirmation) – such that nothing abides outside of the cleft between these two phrases, albeit both phrases form a single sentence with a singular meaning encompassing the whole of existence. The proper understanding of this dialectic is the key to a balanced understanding, and so a balanced divination, with the **NUR Tarot**; and, naturally, constant meditation and reflection upon **Qur’ān 18:65-82** is the *sine qua non* to the proper understanding of this specific card.

Additionally, a few things Jorge Luis Borges (d. 1986) states in a key moment of **The Aleph** serves as an interpretive placeholder, as it were, for a mutually shared inner meaning between this card of **Khidr** and the final **Major Arcana** card of **Baqā’** (subsistence).⁵⁶ To wit,

...Aleph is one of the points in space that contains all points...Yes, the place where, without admixture or confusion, all the places of the world, seen from every angle,

⁵⁴ The matter was phrased this way in our **A Treatise on Woman, Life, Freedom**: ‘God makes to benefit by Its Light whomsoever It Wills and God harms by Its Light whomsoever It desires’ (يُنْفَعُ اللَّهُ بِنُورِهِ مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَيُضَرُّرُ اللَّهُ بِنُورِهِ مَنْ يُرِيدُ).

⁵⁵ And so to do what must be done even if no one else sees the veracity of the act until later, entailing thereby the ability to make those difficult decisions in circumstances where others are not prepared to because due to lack of vision, for this is among the marks of being a true servant of the Divine (‘abd) like **Khidr**.

⁵⁶ Since the *abjad* numerical value of the letter **ghayn** (غ) is the letter **alif** (ا) multiplied 1000 times by itself.

The BOOK of the TREE of HERMES

*coexist ...Truth will not penetrate a recalcitrant understanding. If all the places of the world are within the **Aleph**, there too will be all stars, all lamps, all sources of light...The microcosm of the alchemists and Kabbalists, our proverbial friend the **multum in parvo**, made flesh...[I] saw the coils and springs of love and the alterations of death, [I] saw the **Aleph** from everywhere at once, [I] saw the earth in the **Aleph**, and the **Aleph** once more in the earth and the earth in the **Aleph**...*⁵⁷

Finally here for this opening section of the **Major Arcana**, we should mention that none ought to feel in the least intimidated by the breadth of information provided, since each description given of these cards is by way of an *Orientation* – and in the Illuminationist (*ishrāqī*) sense of that word – that seeks to *orient* its subject to the world of Light beyond the spatiotemporal mundane, and especially to its realm of the Active Imagination and the *mundus imaginalis* (*‘ālam al-mithāl*) where “*bodies are spiritualized and spirits corporealized*.”⁵⁸ This opening section to the **Major Arcana** of the **NUR Tarot** and its first card will also be the longest, given that it sets the initiating context and guiding tone to all the remaining twenty-seven trump cards. With that, no need to belabor the obvious that all who Work with the **NUR Tarot** should always strive to form their own personal relationship with this and all the other cards; and so beyond what has been laid out here, they should allow its archetypes as hieratic iconophanies to guide and speak to them directly during the divination process in an animated, unique and personal way, especially as a lot more has not been said here regarding this and the other cards; because as a sort of **Chaldaean Oracles** for the times; and even though all of these archetypes and Platonic *eidai* are connected to

⁵⁷ Jorge Luis Borges *Collected Fictions*, Trans. Andrew Hurley (Viking Penguin: New York, 1998).

⁵⁸ Corbin, *Spiritual Body and Celestial Earth*, *ibid.* 176-9.

The BOOK of the TREE of HERMES

one another in a seamless narrativel whole; nevertheless each individual card is, as it were, also as a *suhrawardian* Lord of a species all unto itself that is very much alive bearing its own Intelligence with its own alchemically located archetypal narrative – or *visionary recital* - as one of the celestial mothers (*ummahāt*) projecting itself as a **Living Icon** from Above to below.⁵⁹

اگر آن > آب حیات> را می طلبی خضروار پای افزار در پای کن و راه توکل پیش گیر تا به ظلمات رسی

*If you seek [the Water of Life] fasten up your shoes like **Khidr** and take the path of trust in God until you reach the darkness!*⁶⁰

⁵⁹ Here we draw attention to what Iamblichus says to Poryphyry regarding theurgy, rites and statues in the *De mysteriis*, since what is said there applies to what we mean by hieratic iconophany here and that these cards are 'Living Icons', see (ed.), (trans.), (intro.) and (notes) Emma C. Clarke, John M. Dillon and Jackson P. Hershbell *Iamblichus: On the Mysteries* (Society of Biblical Literature: Atlanta, 2003).

⁶⁰ Shihābuddīn Yaḥyā Suhrawardī 'The Red Intellect' ('*aql-i-sorkh*'), **para.** 14 (*my trans.*)